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# AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION.

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## THE LIFE AND WORK\* OF CARROLL DAVIDSON WRIGHT,

FIFTH PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION.

BY S. N. D. NORTH.

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We have gathered to pay tribute to the memory and to commemorate the services of Carroll Davidson Wright, the President of the American Statistical Association. In an active existence of seventy-one years this venerable and useful Association has had but five presidents, each of whom was re-elected until his death. Hon. Richard Fletcher, the first, served six years; Dr. George C. Shattuck, the second, five years; Dr. Edward Javis, the third, thirty years; General Francis A. Walker, the fourth, thirteen years; and Colonel Wright, the fifth President, twelve years.

It is a remarkable roll of illustrious men, each of whom was regarded in his day as the ablest statistician in the United States.

Carroll Davidson Wright was the legitimate legatee of Francis A. Walker, in the presidency of the Association.

At the moment of his untimely death in 1896, General Walker was recognized not only as the ablest statistician this country had yet produced, but the greatest all-round master of the science of statistics. It is my function to demonstrate that President Wright, while he differed from General Walker in many of his methods, while he did not carry the science of

\* Address delivered at a special meeting of the American Statistical Association, Boston, May 14, 1909.

statistics to the close analytical results attained by General Walker, nevertheless belonged by right in this kingly company; that he enlarged the scope of statistical investigation in new and difficult fields; and that in certain important particulars he was the peer, if not the superior, of any of his predecessors.

This is not the occasion for a biography of President Wright, but I must briefly outline certain features of his career which are almost unique, extremely significant, and strikingly illustrative of his character and motives.

Descended from typical New England ancestors, of mingled English and Scotch blood, President Wright was born in New Hampshire in 1840, the son of a devout country preacher of the Universalist denomination. He was taught from boyhood that he must be the architect of his own fortunes. Denied the advantages of college training, he alternately studied in the rural academies and taught school to pay his way. Leaving home at sixteen, at eighteen he was studying law, first at Dedham and afterwards at Boston.

When he was almost ready to take up his chosen profession, he was caught and overwhelmed by the thought that his country needed, instantly, the best service of its every loyal son. At the age of twenty-two he enlisted as a private soldier in Company C of the Fourteenth New Hampshire Volunteers. He was commissioned second lieutenant of his company before his regiment was ordered to the front.

He revealed at once certain qualifications which marked him for special and delicate duties. He was in turn commissary, aide-de-camp, assistant adjutant-general, under different commanding officers; and at the close of the war he returned to his home the colonel in command of the regiment in which he had enlisted as a private.

President Wright resumed the study of law, and was admitted to practice. He made rapid progress in his profession, and as quickly earned the esteem and confidence of his friends and neighbors. In 1871, and again in 1872, he was elected to represent the Sixth Middlesex District in the Massachusetts Senate.

His services here were of notable value, as chairman of the Committees on Insurance and on Military Affairs. His career as lawyer and legislator was permanently ended in 1873, when he accepted the appointment as Commissioner of the newly created Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor.

It was the turning-point in his career. He was upon the threshold of a successful legal practice. He was assured of rapid political advancement in a state which ties to men of his type. It can hardly be said that he dropped his profession with the deliberate intention of never returning to it; he could not foresee what was to happen; but it is certain that he was tempted into the new field by a vague realization of the possibilities it offered for a great governmental innovation. It appealed to his sympathies and aspirations as offering a unique opportunity to do the world a peculiar service. Once his hand was put to the plough, he neither faltered nor hesitated nor regretted. He had found a mission in life. He found himself fitted into just that niche for which his mind and temperament were best adapted. It was given to him to fill this niche for the forty best years of his life; to expand it and enlarge it, as he himself developed and grew; to become recognized throughout the civilized world not only as a pioneer, but as the greatest exponent of a new gospel of industrial ethics.

It thus fell to Colonel Wright to blaze the pathway in an entirely novel field of governmental investigation in the United States,—a field into which many men, at the time, thought it unnecessary, chimerical, and even dangerous for the government to enter at all.

The Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics, established in 1869, was the first bureau of its kind in this country—perhaps the first in the world. Its first chief, General Henry K. Oliver, a good, earnest, honest man, did not fully grasp the significance of the movement he had been chosen to lead. The three years of his administration worked out nothing definite, tangible, or valuable. The whole undertaking was still in the air,—in truth, according to good authority, it was well on the

road to extinction as a useless appendage to the body politic.\*

Governor Washburn sent for Colonel Wright, then about thirty years of age and just completing his service in the Senate. He said to him: "I have watched your work on some measures in the Senate. I think I know you, and now I want you to take charge of this Bureau of Labor, and make it or bust it!" Governor Washburn read the young man right: he must have foreseen something of what was to come from his choice, but he could not have foreseen all nor the greater part.

The Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics was established as a half-hearted, and perhaps not altogether sincere experiment, in recognition of the fact that the relations of capital and labor constitute a practical problem in self-government which the state must face and deal with, in some fashion, sooner or later. It was then regarded as a purely state problem—not an interstate or national problem—which each state must separately handle in its own way. That Massachusetts was the first to recognize its existence is to her everlasting credit. Her action was a natural result of industrial supremacy combined with high civic standards—the same combination of causes which has kept the Bay State ever since in the vanguard of the American commonwealths in legislation to protect and promote the welfare of the wage-earning citizen.

It is difficult to realize, at this distance of time, the discouraging conditions which surrounded the earlier work of the Massachusetts Bureau. Its advent had been made amidst apprehension, criticism, and open or covert hostility on the part of the employing interests. Its failure and abandonment, as I have said, were imminent. The task of steering the ship into a harbor of useful vitality confronted Mr. Wright at the start. He took his bearings by the sun of common sense and constructive conservatism. From the start he resolutely refused, in the face of much pressure and much hostile criticism, to convert this new state mechanism into an engine of factious agitation and partisan propaganda. He set out to make reports that should search for and find the truth, not in the in-

\*See Quarterly Publications, American Statistical Association, March, 1908, p. 15.

terests of one class of the community against those of another, but in the interest of all classes alike. He held the scales impartially.

When President Wright delivered the eulogy before this Association on the character and services of his predecessor, Francis A. Walker, he quoted at length a letter of advice and counsel he solicited and received from him when he became chief of the Massachusetts Bureau. "Your office has only to prove itself superior alike to partisan dictation and to the seductions of theory," wrote General Walker to Colonel Wright, "to command the cordial support of the body of the people. If any mistake is more likely than others to be committed in such a critical position, it is to undertake to recognize both parties as parties, and to award so much in due turn to each. . . . I have strong hopes that you will so distinctly and decisively disconnect the Massachusetts Bureau from politics—from dependence on organizations, whether of workingmen or employers, and from the support of economic theories, individual views, or class interests—as to command the moral support of the whole body of citizens and receive the co-operation of men of all occupations and degrees."

"In this characteristic reply," commented President Wright, "General Walker laid down the enduring principles of official statistics,—whoever adheres to them will meet with success; whoever neglects them commits a crime." In the thousands of pages of official reports and investigations which have since appeared over President Wright's name, there is not an instance of departure from the straight and narrow pathway thus laid down and thus unreservedly accepted. They contain conclusions which were frequently controverted,—from some of which I have myself dissented,—but there is no instance of a partisan bias or a prejudiced perversion of the truth.

Thus in time President Wright conquered opposition, disarmed criticism, and made his bureau the agency for gathering together a wealth of data relating to the conditions surrounding industrialism in Massachusetts which has had enormous influence upon the development of the Commonwealth. In the

forty years that have elapsed, Massachusetts has held aloft the beacon light which, without flickering or wavering, has pointed the way for all the states of the Union.

It is impossible to exaggerate the influence which President Wright's sagacious foresight has exerted in this field. Thirty-four states have followed the example of Massachusetts in establishing labor bureaus. Not always were they established for work along the lines he marked out; not always have they been free in their management from the propaganda he avoided. Sometimes they have been officered by politicians, sometimes by men without scientific training or experience, with no knowledge of the statistical method and its limitations, and with selfish ulterior motives and ambitions but slightly veiled. The sum of their contributions to our statistical literature has been much greater in bulk than in value, and there are occasionally reports which are sadly out of joint with the economic facts.

But whatever of good there is in the reports of these thirty-four state bureaus, whatever of good there is to come from these bureaus in the future, is primarily due to the influence and the example of Colonel Wright. It is just to add that the pace and the precedent he set, at the very beginning of his work, have never yet been fully equalled in any one of these thirty-four states, after an interval of forty years.

President Wright recognized the dangers that threatened these state bureaus under the conditions I have named, and he conceived a plan to minimize the possibilities of evil and to increase their practical usefulness. He planned and organized a National Association of Labor Bureau Chiefs, which this year celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary. He was elected its president in 1885, and re-elected until his retirement from office in 1905. He was rarely absent from its meetings. Here, by wise and good-humored advice and suggestion, and by leading his fellow-commissioners into the critical discussion of their own work, he impressed his personality, his methods, and his ideals upon the whole body. They felt, and were glad to feel, that they were sitting at the feet of their Gamaliel.

In 1884, near the close of President Arthur's administration, the National Bureau of Labor was established by Congress. The name of President Wright was naturally first in the mind of the President as the one man best qualified to organize this bureau, as the first Commissioner of Labor. But it seemed neither fair to him nor to Massachusetts that he should be asked to vacate his state office for a possible service of but two or three months in the national field, when, in accordance with the old-fashioned methods, the commissionership must be tendered to some aspirant bearing the badge of a political party flushed with its first national victory since the Civil War. The perplexity of the President became known to Mr. Cleveland, who sent word that, if Colonel Wright was appointed, he would continue him in the office, as he did. I recall this authenticated incident because it demonstrates the assured position of master in this special field which Colonel Wright had already reached, and, what is quite as important, Grover Cleveland's recognition of the duty of the President to the public. Eight Republican and two Democratic governors in Massachusetts, and four Republican Presidents, and one Democratic President serving two terms, retaining Colonel Wright continuously in the public service, against great pressure for a post towards which ambitious politicians cast covetous eyes. It is a record unique in our history.

Again, with the creation of the National Bureau, there was protest, apprehension, and indignation that the nation should venture to intrude itself into this sacred field of the *laissez-faire*,—to question the right of the business man to handle his hired help in his own way, guided solely by the law of supply and demand. Again, Colonel Wright disarmed criticism by his sane and conservative methods. The critics were not among the manufacturers alone; they included some of the more radical and aggressive of the labor leaders. They argued that the new bureau had been established at the behest and in the interest of labor, to fight its battles openly and constantly. President Wright did not so interpret its functions or his duty. He sought sedulously to avoid controversy, al-

though in the nature of things he lived constantly in its atmosphere. He once told me that it was an unbroken rule of his life never to reply to personal attacks upon himself or his work.

Avoiding the polemics of the labor question, President Wright directed the energies of the National Bureau into the investigation of the economic conditions surrounding labor and the study of methods for promoting the welfare and uplift of the working classes. The reports of the bureau during the twenty years of his administration are a mine of information on such subjects as the conditions of workingmen and working-women, the slums of the cities, co-operative production and distribution, building and loan associations, trade and industrial education, railroad labor, convict labor, industrial depressions, compulsory insurance, the unemployed, wages and hours of labor, the housing of the working people, regulation and restriction of output, together with the annual reports he organized on the costs of productions, strikes and lockouts, wholesale prices, divorce, and the cost of living.

He developed a bureau of economic research, devoted to the study of all movements for the improvement of the conditions of labor. He scrupulously avoided propaganda in the interest of the labor union crusade; and by this wise and conservative course he not only strengthened his bureau and enlarged its sphere and influence, but immensely advanced the material interests of labor, both organized and unorganized.

While his attitude towards the trade-union was always distinctly friendly and sympathetic, he deprecated the excesses that have sometimes distinguished its methods. He became a potent personal factor in the movement for the gradual elimination of the methods of savagery from the strike and the lock-out. His annual reports on the latter subjects were an impartial presentation of the statistical facts revealing the actual results of these trade warfares, accompanied by certain conclusions which his investigations justified. "As a rule, trades-unions oppose strikes," was one of these conclusions. "They are growing more and more conservative in their attitude towards these questions," was another. His influence among

union labor men was uniformly in the direction of moderation; and it steadily pushed forward the advance of organized labor to the position it is destined to occupy in this country. This I know from the words of labor men. President Wright gradually won the deep respect and the profound regard of their ablest and most useful leaders.

From the beginning of his study of this great human question, President Wright foresaw, as through a mental telescope, the position which organized labor was destined to hold in the great drama of industrial life. He had studied the labor question in all phases of its evolution, in all the ages that have gone before. He realized that it was interlocked with the whole future of civilization. He understood that it must pass through its several stages,—stages of injustice, of intrigue, of riot, even of bloodshed. But he foresaw the ultimate outcome, never faltering in his conviction that the time will come when the employer and the employee will settle their grievances face to face, man to man, with open books, each with careful regard for the rights of the other. His faith has carried us a long way towards the realization of that dream.

To his persistent advocacy may be attributed the wide recognition which the principle of collective bargaining, and incidentally of the sliding scale method of wage adjustment, has already secured. He taught employers that it is better "to deal with well-organized and administered trade-unions as the medium through which to adjust questions of wages and other conditions of employment, rather than subject themselves to the chaotic and unreliable results which follow when workmen act as individuals."

The direct moral influence of Colonel Wright's personality and work was much greater than organized labor itself yet realizes, and it is an influence destined to continue and increase.

It was quite as potent with the manufacturer. He compelled the respectful attention of the employers of labor throughout the country; he was a frequent and honored guest and speaker at their gatherings. He held and fearlessly enunciated a doctrine regarding their duty and their opportunity which

lifted the manufacturer above the category of the mere fabricator of goods and wares, the mere purveyor to physical wants, the mere seeker after dollars. I will illustrate this by a single quotation from his writings, which embodies the highest conception of the responsibility of the entrepreneur, a conception which not so many generations back would have been regarded as preposterous, but which to-day, while not always, perhaps not generally, accepted, is no longer openly disputed:—

“The weal or woe of the operative population depends largely upon the temper in which the employers carry the responsibility intrusted to them. I know of no trust more sacred than that given into the hands of the captains of industry, for they deal with human beings in close relations; not through the media of speech or exhortation, but of positive association, and by this they can make or mar. Granted that the material is often poor, the intellects often dull, then all the more sacred the trust and all the greater the responsibility. The rich and powerful manufacturer, with the adjuncts of education and good business training, holds in his hand something more than the means of subsistence for those he employs: he holds their moral well-being in his keeping, in so far as it is in his power to mould their morals. He is something more than a producer: he is an instrument of God for the upbuilding of the race.

“This may sound like sentiment: I am willing to call it sentiment; but I know it means the best material prosperity, and that every employer who has been guided by such sentiments has been rewarded twofold,—first, in witnessing the wonderful improvement of his people; and, second, in seeing his dividends increase and the wages of the operatives increase with his dividends. The factory system of the future will be run on this basis. The instances of such are multiplying now, and, whenever it occurs, the system outstrips the pulpit in the actual work of the gospel; that is, in the work of humanity. It needs no gift of prophecy to foretell the future of a system which has in it more possibilities for good for the masses who

must work for day wages than any scheme which has yet been devised by philanthropy alone." \*

And so President Wright conducted the National Labor Bureau as he had conducted the State Labor Bureau. So it happened that he had the unique experience of being continued at the head of these two bureaus as long as he would stay there,—an experience the more remarkable and interesting because this particular bureau was a storm centre, always encompassed about by political dynamite. He had come to be known as the sane seeker after truth. He had compelled the complete confidence of his fellow-men.

This is the central and striking fact in his life,—the key to his character and his career. I shall therefore dwell upon it here, in the hope that we may fully understand it.

In the first place, Colonel Wright was a man of great tact. He was what is known as a good "mixer." He could fit himself to every environment. In personal intercourse he was cordiality, kindness, and good humor combined. I have rarely known a better story-teller. He had an anecdote to fit every emergency. He could relieve a taut situation by a flash of quaint or subtle humor that would force a laugh on the verge of a quarrel. He was pre-eminently a pacificator: his mission was to point the pathway to peace; and he had consummate art in finding it. But never at the sacrifice of his own convictions. He would never commit himself to a course he believed to be wrong; but he could see both sides of every question, and, when he was compelled to differ, he knew how to do it without arousing militant antagonism. He commanded respect for his opinions, but he thrust them down no man's throat. His absolute sincerity was never questioned, even though it was always yoked with urbanity.

Thus President Wright possessed all the qualifications for the most difficult duty which fell to him by reason of his office as National Commissioner of Labor,—the duty of acting as the official investigator of great labor disturbances and sometimes as arbitrator between the contending parties. He was the

\* "The Factory System as an Element of Civilization," by Carroll D. Wright.

chairman of the commission appointed by President Cleveland to investigate the great Chicago strike of 1894. That strike in some of its aspects, and particularly in the questions of national authority involved, was the most dangerous and ominous labor strike which has taken place in this country. President Wright's report was absolutely colorless in its presentation of the facts, fearless in its analysis of their bearing upon each other, and uncompromising in its conclusions. It at once encountered a criticism most violent and vitriolic. In the case of almost any other man, the episode would necessarily have terminated his public career. With President Wright, as the atmosphere cleared, and passion cooled, it added much to the strength of his position.

In the great anthracite coal strike of 1902 Colonel Wright was, from the beginning to the end, the trusted adviser of President Roosevelt, and helped him to shape the masterly policy by which he dealt with the situation. While the trouble was still brewing and before the actual strike occurred, the President called upon Mr. Wright to ascertain and report to him the causes and conditions underlying and surrounding the controversy between the miners and the operators. Within a period of less than two weeks Mr. Wright had placed in the President's hands a report which condensed into twenty printed pages the whole horrible story of a controversy that had been brewing for years, and was complicated by innumerable technical intricacies and interwoven disputes as to the facts. The report is one of the most luminous and discriminating documents in official literature. It handled fearlessly, lucidly, and with absolute impartiality the several contentions of both parties. It contains this interesting basis for the diagnosis it presents: "The specific demands in a strike are the material elements on which the controversy is based. But the psychological elements must also be considered, to ascertain the true situation." In its analysis of the case, from these two points of view, the report is a masterpiece. It concluded with certain "suggestions that seem desirable and just." "Should they be adopted," said the Commissioner, "with some

modifications perhaps, they would lead to a more peaceful and satisfactory condition in the anthracite coal regions. They may not lead, even if adopted fully, to perfect peace, nor to the millennium; but I believe they will help to allay irritation and to reach the day when the anthracite coal region shall be governed systematically, and in accordance with greater justice and higher moral principles than now generally prevail on either side."

These suggestions were not accepted, either in whole or in part, by either party. The report was followed in time by that long, bitter, and dramatic strike which the President finally terminated by the appointment of the Arbitration Tribunal, to whose findings he compelled both parties to agree in advance to abide. Colonel Wright was the recorder of that tribunal, and its guiding spirit throughout its long, epoch-making proceedings.

Thus we realize how important a chapter President Wright's life constitutes in the history of the labor movement in America—"quorum pars magna fui." No other man, all things considered, has played so large a part in the remarkable modification of the legal, the political, the social, and the educational status of the workingman that marks the last half-century.

During all these years of official activity President Wright displayed an extraordinary literary industry and a versatility equally remarkable. One of his great tasks was the completion of the Eleventh Census after Superintendent Porter's resignation,—a task for which he was again selected by President Cleveland, because no other available man was so conspicuously fitted to wind up the work.

He had been thoroughly trained in the general principles governing the practical application of the statistical method in the development of his bureau work. He had inaugurated many new statistical presentations of the human problems in the most difficult field of statistics. There is no more troublesome problem, for instance, than the statistical study of wages and the proper differentiation between wages and earnings. We are to-day still very far from the satisfactory treatment

of this complex problem. President Wright frankly admitted that his handling of this and of some other statistical problems was crude and tentative. But he had one characteristic as a statistician by which his successors in this field must judge him, and out of which grew his chief service to the science of statistics. It may best be stated in his own language:—

“If the statistical investigator is really scientific in his methods of study, he cares not so much to be pleased by what the results may bring out as to feel assured that the showing is accurate; he is ready at all times to recast his opinions, to modify his reasoning, and even to turn his mind into new channels of thought, whenever the statistical results require that such changes shall be made; his face is always turned to the light.”\*

With this intense devotion to the truth, at the sacrifice of all personal opinions, President Wright cherished profound contempt for the statisticians—so called, and, alas! too plentiful—who ingeniously and ingenuously twist and distort statistics to give color or credence to some preconceived conception or prejudice on the subject under statistical treatment. It is a simple matter, as President Wright often pointed out in his lectures, by some deft construction of statistical tables, unsuspected by all but the trained expert, to convey totally false impressions regarding the real facts under consideration. The statistical fallacy thus championed is the more dangerous, because of its plausibility, when apparently fortified by official figures, which are supposed never to lie, and yet can be made to lie atrociously. The statistical mountebank was the scorn and horror of Colonel Wright. It is the presence of this statistical mountebank everywhere—in the newspaper, on the rostrum, in official reports—which has hampered and limited the science of statistics, as the one effective instrument by which to measure the volume and the trend of the great forces always at work in the evolution of human society.

President Wright was an attractive personality on the lecture platform, and his services were always at the disposal of a good cause in any part of the country. His repertoire was full

\* Outline of Practical Sociology.

to overflowing. He was most effective in interesting the public in the topics which occupied his own thoughts,—topics too commonly regarded as tedious. His way of presenting them appealed to the popular audience by its appeal to the human element. But he was always serious and always scholarly. He was for years a lecturer in the economics department of the Catholic University at Washington, and in the George Washington University; and he delivered many courses of lectures before the Lowell Institute and most of our universities and colleges.

He was a tireless contributor to magazine literature. His essays on social and industrial topics constantly appeared in our best periodicals. He was the author of two notable books, “The Industrial Evolution of the United States” and “An Outline of Practical Sociology,” both of which have passed through many editions and have done great service as textbooks in our educational institutions. To convey a definite impression of his intellectual activity, I have attempted a bibliography of his writings—ephemeral, official, and otherwise—which I shall attach to this address.\* It embraces no less than 350 titles.

I would not convey the impression that this formidable title list reflects the individuality of Colonel Wright alone. He would have been the first to disclaim such an inference. He possessed in marked degree the power to train co-operative thinkers and to direct their work in the channels of his own thought. His bureau at Washington has been a university for the education of experts in statistics, in sociology, in economics, and in industrial studies. From no other office has graduated so large a group of trained men who are making their mark to-day in the government service, in our educational institutions, and in social and civic organizations.

I must not omit allusion to the great work he planned and to the supervision of which he devoted the best energies of his later years, “The Economic History of the United States,”

\* Owing to lack of space this bibliography will be published in the September number of these publications.—[ED.]

financed by the Carnegie Institution at Washington, of whose trustees and executive committee he was an active member from its foundation. Surrounding himself with a corps of the first specialists in each field of economic research, some fifteen in number, he blocked out a work which, in scope, in thoroughness of research, and in significance of results, is without a prototype in the economic field, which will stand for all time as the standard study of the origins, the development, and the influence of the civic institutions of the nation which are profoundly modifying the civilization of the globe. He hoped to live to see its completion. It will become his monument.

But the magnitude of this task weighed upon him; and he had overestimated and overtaxed his strength for years. It can truly be said of him that he literally worked himself to death.

As he neared the completion of forty years of official service, under changed administrative conditions in Washington, which were naturally irksome after his long years as the head of an independent department, President Wright was approached by the late Senator George F. Hoar with the suggestion that he accept the presidency of the new Clark College in Worcester, recently endowed by the founder of Clark University, but occupying an independent relation to that institution. President Wright was deeply touched by the suggestion. It came at a most opportune time. Though he maintained his wonderful serenity undiminished, he felt tired after his long service, and he realized that his physical strength was waning. He was impressed that he, unblessed by college education, should be deemed most worthy to organize a new college, designed to teach the old institutions some new and better methods of education. He gratefully accepted the trust, and he put Clark College on its feet, bringing into its organization and methods certain new and practical ideas, destined to work something of a revolution in our American colleges. From the day that Clark College opened its doors, with President Wright as its head, it was a success; and it will continue to grow and to thrive because it will cling to his ideals.

I have thus hurriedly sketched this unique and inspiring career, and indicated some of its multiform activities and something of the character and personality, something of the spirit, the methods, and the ideals which marked it and made it a thing apart.

I have left for the last a reference to the real secret of the man whose memory we so profoundly revere. We must couple with this picture of the man a brief study of his philosophy of life, if we are to fully understand him.

At the foundation of this philosophy was the instinctive sense of justice. In working out a theory of life based upon the sense of justice, President Wright troubled himself very little with the abstractions of political economy. He is often spoken of as an economist: it is doubtful if the economists, profoundly as they respect him, will accord him a high place in their synagogue. He took little interest in the theories of capital, of exchange, of money and its value, of the production and distribution of wealth, of the dynamics of the science,—of any of the controverted topics which have filled so many dreary libraries and led to so many endless controversies among the economists since the attempt to formulate such a science first began. Throughout the great volume of his writings and reports these topics are avoided,—ignored. An entirely different point of view everywhere pervades and illumines them.

We may call it the ethical point of view. Birks has defined ethics as the science of ideal humanity; and that definition fits Mr. Wright's conception of the science it was his life-work to expound. He dealt with the nature and grounds of moral obligation and the rules which ought to determine conduct in accordance with this obligation. This is the spirit which always underlies his analysis of statistics and his interpretation of a given statement of facts.

"The real labor question," he wrote in "*Sociology*," "is the struggle of humanity for a higher standard"; and, again, "It is a conflict which cannot be avoided, and which has existed since the beginning of man. This conflict is the labor ques-

tion in the broadest sense,—not the minor problems of rates of wages and hours of labor.”

Thus he was a sociologist rather than an economist; and, as he interpreted the science of sociology, it is the science which studies for the betterment of society and the world.

In all his work, President Wright was guided and inspired by a temperamental characteristic which must be fully understood if we would know the man and properly interpret his works. It was common for his friends and students, in analyzing the spirit pervading his work, to speak of him as an optimist. No untoward concatenation of events seemed able to shake his serene confidence that all things are working out for the best in God's scheme for the universe. He possessed a radiant faith in humanity and in the orderly evolution of human society. It was not merely the spirit of hope, not merely the habit of looking at the bright side of things, or the blind acceptance of the useful proverb that it is always darkest just before the dawn: it was something deeper and more comprehensive than a mere temperamental characteristic. It had its root in the complete acceptance of the great fundamental law which governs this universe and all things in it, the law of progressive evolution.

The statisticians have a habit of representing the meaning of figures by the graphic chart, commonly called the art of cartography. A symbolism frequently used is the curve. There is hardly any line of statistics that does not yield readily to this form of graphic presentation. The peculiarity about these curve lines, when applied to sociological statistics, is that, while they frequently show a tendency to drop, and the depression is often sharp and sudden and sometimes prolonged over a long period, yet, if the statistical range covers a period sufficiently long to justify final conclusions, it is found that the curve line, once it begins to recover its upward movement, lands at a point higher than that at which it rested when the tendency to drop began. In other words, while the progress of the world is often interrupted by the operation of temporary causes, nevertheless there is always progress. Despite set-backs

here and there, despite the fact that we can often see no sign, the upward tendency exists and persists, and the world is growing better all the time. That is the philosophy and the inspiration of President Wright's interpretation of statistics. That is the spirit he read into them, not arbitrarily, not temperamentally, but because he was big enough and broad enough and sane enough to know that that must be, in accordance with the immutable law which governs this universe. That is why his influence and his teachings were so healthy, so wholesome, so powerful for good. No man in this country has done more to teach the people how to read aright the lessons which all honest statistics teach them, when rightly understood and honestly interpreted.

He has taught the nation that every new collision between labor and capital, so far from sowing new dragons' teeth to fructify into new crops of dissension, tends to bring into clearer light the economic principles which must, in the end, determine the relations between these two great forces of industrial life, each as necessary to the other as the two poles of an electric battery. He has taught that every such conflict illumines anew the great ethical principle underlying the whole question,—that neither party to such a conflict has any rights which in the slightest degree interfere with the rights of others.

Looking still deeper into President's Wright's philosophy, we find its full and final explanation in the profoundly religious spirit of the man. It seems perfectly natural that he was frequently called upon to occupy the pulpit in the church to which he was devoted, for the delivery of a lay sermon. We can best show how the religious spirit moulded and guided his thought by quoting from the concluding words of his "Practical Sociology":—

"There is a new religion," he wrote,—“a religion of progress. . . . The study of life's problems convinces me that there is coming a revival of a religion which shall hold in its power the church, industry, commerce, and the whole social fabric. Any solution, all solutions, must embody within themselves

some phase of such a religion, and unless they do, they will have no force."

Here is revealed a reasoned and deep-rooted trust in the essential beneficence of the all-pervading divine purpose, which President Wright found writ large in the history of all ages and human society everywhere.